



OCEAN & COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

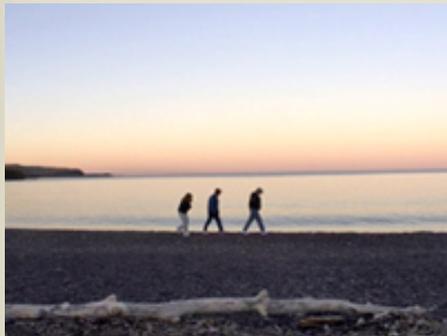
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Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

Managing Our Coastlines by Working Together

America's coastlines are vital to the nation's economy. They are home to millions of residents, a base of operations for many vibrant industries, a playground for millions of visitors, and the foundation for a diverse plant and animal community.



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) works closely with all coastal states and territories to balance economic growth with the protection of sensitive coastal and Great Lakes resources.

Learn about NOAA's role in managing our nation's ocean and coastal resources, the issues facing our coastal areas, and what is being done to ensure our coasts grow and develop for public enjoyment long into the future.

of **SPECIAL NOTE**

Coastal Program Managers are blown away by presentation of new OCRM web site design. [Read details...](#)

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The Importance of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

The 95,331 miles of ocean and Great Lakes coastlines are home to almost 153 million Americans, about 53 percent of the total U.S. population. Our nation's coasts host a variety of industrial and business activities - fisheries, energy plants, marine transportation, and recreation - that contribute tens of billions of dollars to the economy per year. Our ports handle about \$700 billion in merchandise, the cruise industry generates \$12 billion annually, and retail expenditure on recreational boating account for over \$30 billion nationwide. Tourism and recreation continue to add value to the nation's fastest-growing business sectors, with some 180 million people visiting the coasts each year. But there's more! Over 37 million people and 19 million homes were added to coastal areas over the last three decades. Per day and on average, about 3,600 people relocate to coastal areas, estimated to amount to 165 million by 2015.



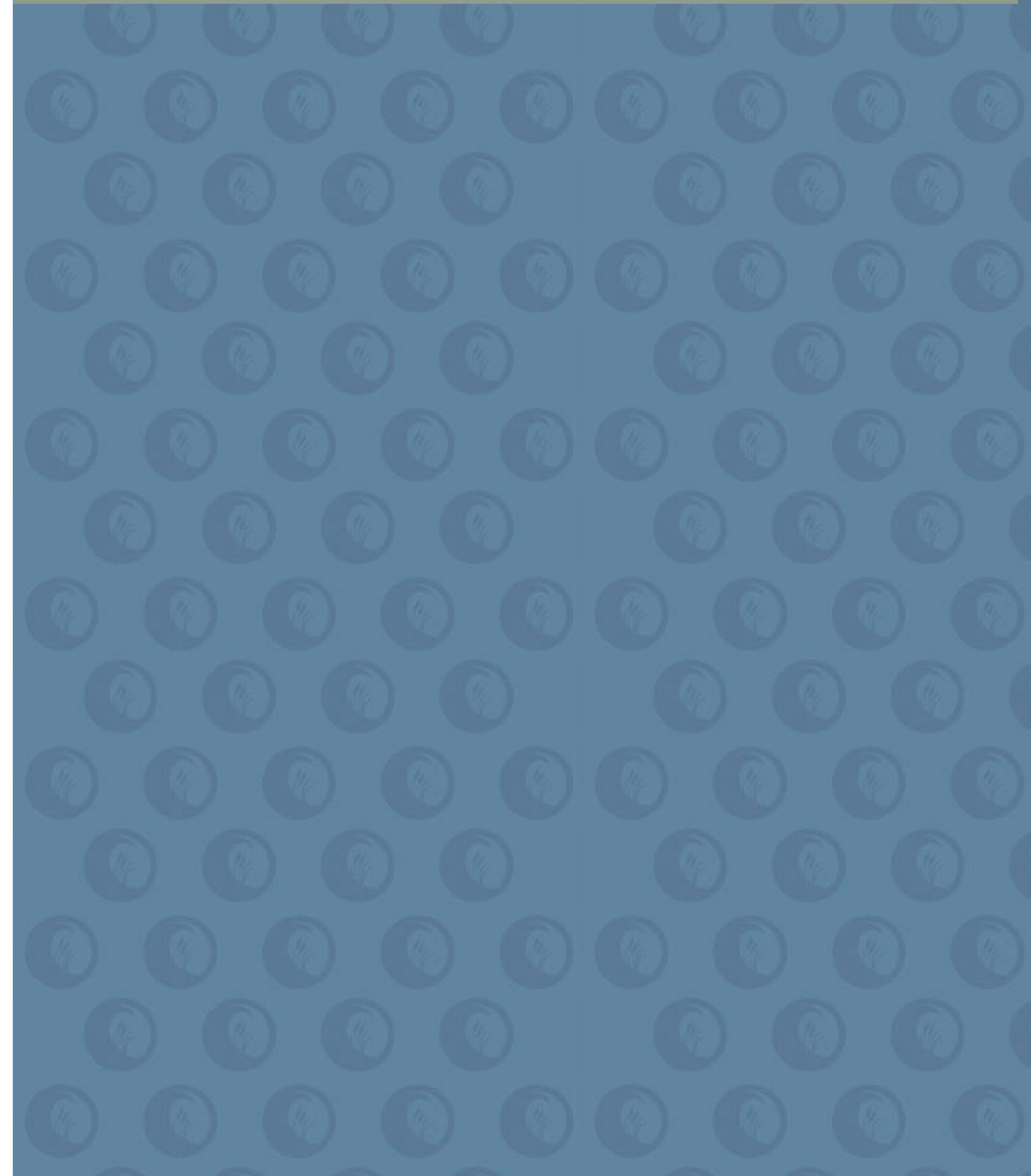
Ports are an important part of our national economy. Columbia River, OR

Coastal areas exist under much and increasing pressures from pollution, habitat degradation, public-access, over-fishing, invasive species, and coastal hazards, including hurricanes and sea level rise. Cause, effect and impact severity relate directly to population size. In short, the challenges of effective coastal management are mounting.

When the Coastal Zone Management Act was passed by Congress in 1972 it was particularly designed to address the challenges facing our oceans and coasts. This website will guide you through the many issues of coastal management and show you how the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, a division of the National Ocean Service within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), plays an important role to address these issues.

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Working In Partnership to Manage Our Coasts

The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), part of the National Ocean Science (NOS), and one of the six main offices of NOAA, is responsible for implementing the [Coastal Zone Management Act \(CZMA\)](#) of 1972, which Congress passed to address the growing concerns about the health of the nation's coastal resources.

Divisions within the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

OCRM is comprised of four divisions that oversee ocean and coastal management at the federal level:

- [The Coastal Programs Division](#) oversees the National Coastal Zone Management Program comprised of 34 state and territory coastal management programs. The division is also responsible for advancing national coastal management objectives and maintaining and strengthening state and territorial coastal management capabilities. The division supports states through financial assistance, mediation, technical services and information, and participation in state, regional and local forums.
- [The National Policy and Evaluation Division](#) leads national coastal management policy and planning efforts and is responsible for conducting periodic performance evaluations of the research reserves and state coastal management programs as required by the CZMA. The division also collaborates with the [Coastal States Organization](#) and the Coastal Coordination Committee on joint state/federal activities.
- [Estuarine Reserves Division](#) oversees the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), a partnership program between NOAA and the coastal states. The NERRS represents a nationwide network of 26 federally designated protected areas established for long-term research, education and coastal stewardship. The division also administers the Graduate Research Fellowship Program that supports graduate student research in NERRS and coordinates the national system-wide monitoring program that tracks short and long-term variability in estuarine water quality and weather. The division supports reserves through financial assistance, technical services, and participation in state, regional and local forums.
- [Marine Protected Areas \(MPA\) Center](#) was established in 2000 under the Presidential Executive Order 13158 (MPAs) to facilitate the effective use of science, technology, training, and information in the planning, management, and evaluation of the

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nation's system of marine protected areas. The National MPA Center works with the Department of the Interior and other agencies and stakeholders to develop a plan for an effective, integrated system of MPAs.

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Coastal Programs Division: Partnering with States to Manage Our Coastline

The National Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program is a voluntary partnership between the federal government and U.S. coastal states and territories authorized by the [Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972](#). The Coastal Programs Division, within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, administers the program at the federal level and works with our state coastal zone management partners to:



It is important to protect our natural resources so future generations can also enjoy activities such as razor clamming.

- Preserve, protect, develop, and, where possible, restore and enhance the resources of the nation's coastal zone for this and succeeding generations;
- Encourage and assist the states to exercise effectively their responsibilities in the coastal zone to achieve wise use of land and water resources, giving full consideration to ecological, cultural, historic, and esthetic values, as well as the need for compatible economic development;
- Encourage the preparation of special area management plans to provide increased specificity in protecting significant natural resources, reasonable coastal-dependent economic growth, improved protection of life and property in hazardous areas and improved predictability in governmental decision-making; and
- Encourage the participation, cooperation, and coordination of the public, federal, state, local, interstate and regional agencies, and governments affecting the coastal zone.

The Coastal Programs Division is also responsible for advancing national coastal management objectives and maintaining and strengthening state and territorial coastal management capabilities. It supports states through financial assistance, mediation, technical services, and participation in priority state, regional and local forums.

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Thirty-four coastal and Great Lakes states, territories and commonwealths have approved coastal management programs. Together, these programs protect more than 99 percent of the nation's 95,331 miles of oceanic and Great Lakes coastline.

To comprehensively manage our coastal resources and balance often competing land and water uses while protecting sensitive resources, state coastal zone management programs are expected to:

- Protect natural resources;
- Manage development in high hazard areas;
- Manage development to achieve quality coastal waters;
- Give development priority to coastal-dependent uses;
- Have orderly processes for the siting of major facilities;
- Locate new commercial and industrial development in, or adjacent to, existing developed areas;
- Provide public access for recreation;
- Redevelop urban waterfronts and ports, and preserve and restore historic, cultural, and esthetic coastal features;
- Simplify and expedite governmental decision-making actions;
- Coordinate state and federal actions;
- Give adequate consideration to the views of federal agencies;
- Assure that the public and local governments have a say in coastal decision-making; and
- Comprehensively plan for and manage living marine resources.



Crabbing and fishing are important coastal-dependent uses in Washington.

A unique aspect of coastal zone management is "[Federal Consistency](#)" which ensures that federal actions that are reasonably likely to affect any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone will be consistent with the enforceable policies of a coastal state's or territory's federally approved Coastal Zone Management Program.

In 1990, Congress created a new program under the Coastal Zone Management Act, called the [Coastal Zone Enhancement Program](#). The program provides incentives for states and territories to make changes in any of eight areas of national significance.

Another important component of coastal zone management programs is the [Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program](#). Authorized by Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990, this amendment requires states and territories with approved coastal zone management programs to develop and implement coastal nonpoint programs to control nonpoint source pollution from six main sources: agricultural, forestry, urban development, marinas, hydromodifications (such as dams or stream channel modifications), and the loss of wetland and riparian areas.

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The Many Faces of Coastal Issues

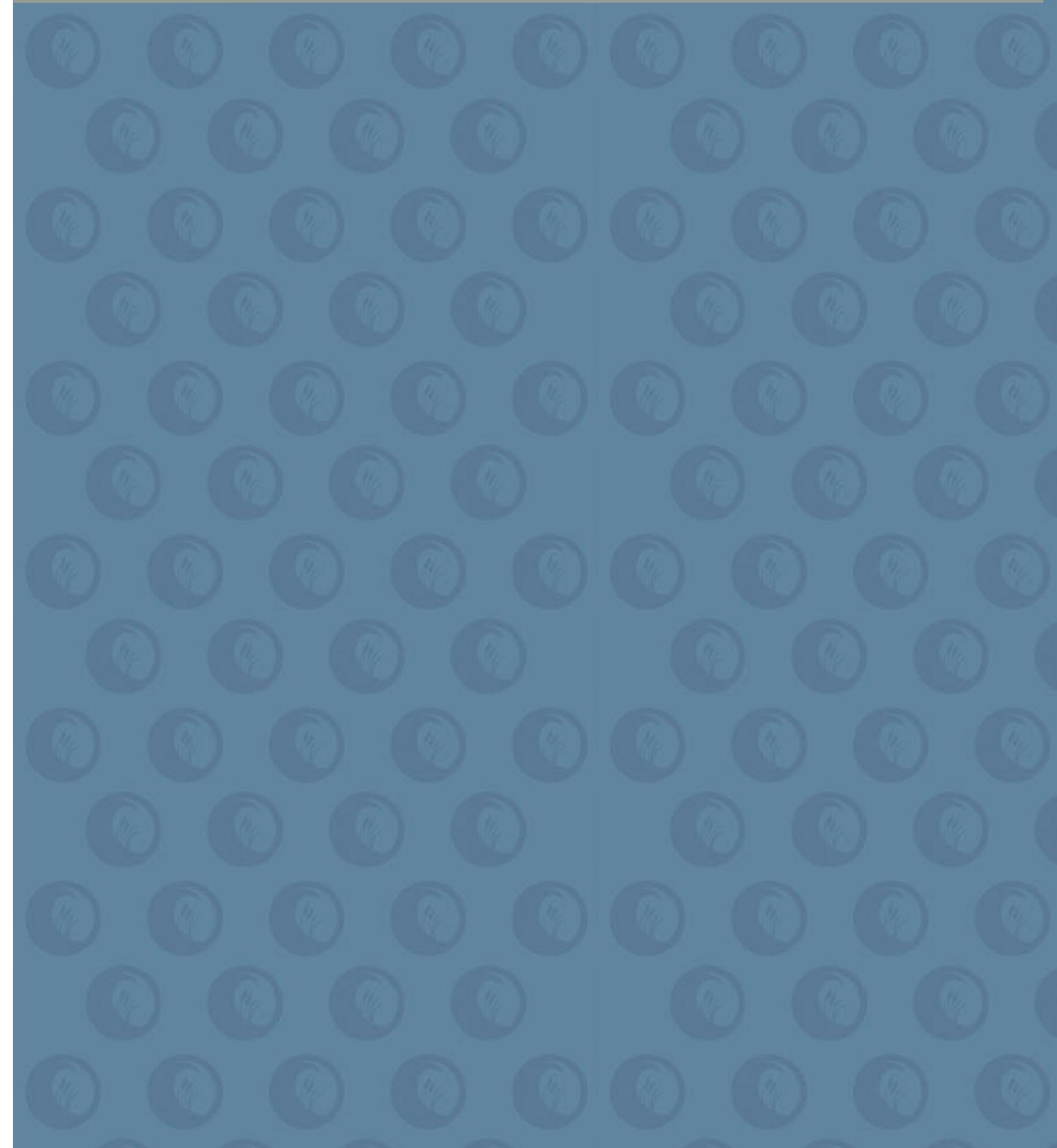
Numerous coastal issues face our nation every day—from helping communities prepare for and recover from devastating storms, to restoring important wetlands critical for the survival of fish and wildlife, to ensuring the public has access to our nation's beaches.

Our states and territories work to ensure regulations, policies, management plans, and education and outreach tools exist and are being used effectively to maintain a balance between often competing uses of our coast, while preserving and protecting important coastal natural resources for our enjoyment long into the future.



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Marine Debris

Marine debris is a persistent and often overlooked coastal management issue with wide-ranging impacts. Marine debris is any man-made object discarded, disposed of, or abandoned that enters the coastal or marine environment. It may enter directly at sea from a platform or ship, or indirectly when washed out to sea via rivers, streams and storm drains. Types of marine debris include derelict fishing gear, derelict vessels, and an assortment of domestic and industrial waste products. Marine debris is a significant problem facing all coastal communities. Marine debris threatens sensitive ocean and coastal habitats, important marine organisms such as marine mammals, fish, and seabirds, human health and safety, navigation, and tourism.



In remote coastal areas, such as this photo from Unalaska, AK, marine debris that has washed ashore needs to be removed by boat.

Efforts to address marine debris began in the 1970s, but there has been a renewed interest in marine debris since it was identified as a significant issue in the U.S. Commission on [Ocean Policy's 2004 Report](#). Recognizing the need for a centralized marine debris program within NOAA, Congress appropriated funds in 2005 and 2006 to establish the NOAA Marine Debris Program. This program is undertaking national and international efforts focusing on identifying, removing, reducing, and preventing debris in the

[Marine Debris Home](#)

[OCRM Activities](#)

[Case Studies](#)

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- water quality

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marine environment. The NOAA Marine Debris Program is coordinated across several NOAA offices, including the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM).

In Depth: "[What is marine debris?](#)"

What Types of Projects and Programs Have Been Developed to Address Marine Debris?

Marine debris programs vary widely to address different types of marine debris, and different environments where marine debris is a problem. Some examples of marine debris programs developed in the states include:

- Coastal and coral reef clean-ups;
- Adopt-A-Beach programs;
- Coordination with Clean Marina Programs;
- Establishing disposal and recycling containers in recreation areas (beaches, waterfronts, piers);
- Derelict vessel removal;
- Developing school lesson plans or curricula;
- Education, outreach, public awareness initiatives/campaigns;
- Distributing pocket cigarette ashtrays;
- Regional coordination and management efforts; and
- Derelict fishing gear removal.

Links

[NOAA Marine Debris Program](#) -- provides background information on NOAA's Marine Debris Program, lists funding opportunities to support activities that will prevent or remove marine debris, or increase public awareness and publications related to marine debris.

[Environmental Protection Agency](#) -- includes additional information on marine debris, its impacts and what is being done to reduce marine debris.

[The Ocean Conservancy](#) -- provides additional information on marine debris, including the Ocean Conservancy's annual International Coastal Clean-Up and regular beach monitoring programs.

["An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century"](#), Final Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy

Chapter 18: Reducing Marine Debris

The Marine Debris Research and Reduction Act

For additional information, contact kris.wall@noaa.gov.

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Managing Our Coastlines -- a Continuous Effort

As our stunning coastlines continue to draw millions of visitors and permanent residents, the resulting economic and environmental concerns require increased attention. To address identified management needs, the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) works with state partners with other organizations on a number of nation-wide initiatives. Some of these initiatives, such as the Coral Conservation Program and Coastal Program Enhancements, have been undertaken at the direction of Congress, while others are a direct response to requests made by the 34 states and territories that are part of the coastal management program.



The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management and state and local governments are working together under the Coastal Zone Management Act to ensure that Americans can visit the nation's beaches and coastlines.

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Shoreline Management: Alternatives to Hardening the Shore

Shoreline erosion is a natural process. However, sea level rise and poorly planned shoreline development projects can accelerate natural erosion rates. A 2000 Heinz Center report also found that within the next 60 years, shoreline erosion will claim one in four U. S. homes within 500 feet of the shore, costing coastal property owners roughly \$530 million per year.

With over 127 million people living along our coasts and estuaries as of 2000, and an additional 180 million using the areas for recreation each year, the impacts of coastal erosion are a significant problem for coastal managers. The Coastal States Organization's 2004 survey, [Improving Links Between Science and Coastal Management](#), illustrates this with 88% of the coastal management community ranking managing areas prone to erosion as the most important coastal hazards issue they face.



Shoreline erosion, such as this bluff erosion shown here, is a significant issue for many coastal managers.

As tasked by the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), state coastal management programs must minimize loss of life and property caused by erosion and sea level rise while continuing to protect our natural coastal resources. Therefore, the solution to shoreline erosion is not as simple as hardening our shorelines with bulkheads, riprap or groins to wall off the sea.

The Tool Box

[Planning, Policy and Regulatory Tools](#)

[Soft/Alternative Stabilization Methods](#)

[Economics of Shoreline Management](#)

[Resources](#)

- **Environmental Assessments**
- **Funding**
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Seawalls and other hard shoreline stabilization structures, can disrupt natural shoreline processes and destroy shoreline habitats such as wetlands and intertidal beaches.

While these [hard stabilization techniques](#) may be appropriate and effective solutions under some circumstances, they can be very costly and can also interrupt natural shoreline processes and sand movement that can lead to increased erosion downdrift from the structure. In addition, shoreline hardening destroys valuable shoreline habitats including wetlands and intertidal areas.

Recently, more attention is being placed on alternative shoreline management techniques including [soft](#), [non-structural](#), [hybrid](#) or [planning and policy](#) approaches. The "Resource Toolbox" on this site provides coastal managers with additional information about the variety of shoreline management tools available, emphasizing these "alternative" approaches. General resource information, case studies and links to other useful resources are also included in the toolbox.

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States and Territories Working With NOAA on Coastal Management

Thirty-four U.S. States and island territories have active coastal management programs. (The State of Illinois is currently developing a program.) Click on a state or territory, below, to see the types of activities underway in your area.



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My State: Oregon

Oregon's Coastal Program

The [Oregon Coastal Program](#), approved by NOAA in 1977, is comprised of a network of agencies with authority in the coastal zone. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development serves as the lead agency. The primary authority for the Oregon Coastal Program is the Oregon Land Use Planning Act. The [Oregon coastal zone](#) includes the state's coastal watersheds and extends inland to the crest of the coast range, with a few minor exceptions.



Redfish Rocks along the southern Oregon coast are home to a breeding population of over 20,000 Common Murres.

The Oregon Coastal Program is a leader in coastal ocean planning. Two major initiatives for Oregon's coastal managers are mitigating coastal hazards and managing Pacific Ocean resources. Oregon's waters, which extend three miles from the coast, include intertidal areas and offshore rocks and reefs. Local governments oversee activity along the state's coast by following local land use plans that are consistent with statewide goals for the coast.

State Facts

Miles of Coast: 1,410

Coastal Population (2000):
1,326,072

Lead Coastal Management Agency: Department of Land Conservation and Development

Approval Date: 1977

Oregon's National Estuarine Research Reserve

The [South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve](#), a 4,771 acre natural area, is located in the Coos estuary on the south coast. The Reserve was designated in 1974 as the first unit of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. South Slough NERR encompasses a mixture of open water channels, tidal and freshwater wetlands, riparian areas, and forested uplands. The Reserve supports and coordinates research, education, and stewardship programs that promote a scientific and public understanding of estuaries and contribute to improved estuarine management.

Program Successes

[Oregon Promotes Low Impact Development through it's Show off Your Runoff Program](#)

[Technical Assistance Tools for Hazard Management in Oregon](#)

Links

[Oregon's Coastal Program](#) -- Provides information on the Program's activities including planning, coastal hazards, and public access.

[South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) -- The Reserve's website provides information on their many research, education, and stewardship activities.

[Marine Protected Areas](#) -- Search for marine protected areas by state, region, or topic area.

[Oregon's Coastal Nonpoint Program Conditional Approval](#) -- The Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program encourages better coordination between state coastal zone managers and water quality experts to reduce polluted runoff in the coastal zone. The state has a conditionally approved program.

[Oregon's Coastal Program Evaluation \(2003\)](#) -- The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management conducts periodic performance reviews of federally approved state coastal management programs.

[South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve Evaluation \(2005\)](#) -- The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management conducts periodic performance reviews of estuarine research reserves.

[Oregon's Coastal Atlas](#) -- Oregon has developed an interactive mapping tool that can be used to learn more about Oregon's Coast.

Contact Information for Oregon's Programs:

Ocean and Coastal Program
Department of Land Conservation and Development
635 Capitol Street NE, Suite 150
Salem, Oregon 97301-2540
(503) 373-0050

South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
P.O. Box 5417
Charleston, OR 97420
(541) 888-5558

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